

Vision Quest

Doing the Right Thing: How the Military Services Support Employment of People with Disabilities While Meeting EO 13101 Requirements

“Our instructions are very simple - to respect the Earth and each other, to respect life itself.”¹

The late Mathew King
Contemporary Lakota elder

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program is committed to helping the Federal Government realize its vision of a cleaner, safer, healthier environment for its employees and citizens. As a mandatory source of supply for the Federal government, part of that commitment is to furnish products and services that meet the requirements of Executive Order 13101. In so doing, the JWOD Program is realizing its own mission ...creating and sustaining quality employment opportunities and job training for Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

The Executive Order spells out a mammoth-size mission – a mission that requires an enormous amount of energy, commitment, dedication, and – especially - cooperation among all Federal agencies and departments in order to bring this vision to life.

One example of “green partnering” is how the uniformed services joined together in writing letters expressing mutual support of both the JWOD Program and the OFEE missions. Elsie L. Munsell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Installations and Environment), writes to Navy leadership about the requirement to purchase copier paper in compliance with EO 13101. She cites the enormous amount of paper purchased by DoD in 1998 – 31,000 tons (according to GSA and GPO figures!) Thomas McCall, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health), writes about the importance of conserving natural resources and reducing the solid waste stream. McCall emphasizes that such an effort requires teamwork among all players, including “product users, procurement and supply personnel.” Army Assistant Secretary (Installations, Logistics and Environment) Raymond Fatz stresses the importance of educating staff with purchasing authority about the EO and the need to comply with its directives.

All the documents address the requirement to purchase recycled content copier paper and other recycled content and environmentally preferable products. The environmental executives also point out that recycled-content paper (and other EO 13101 compliant products) are available through the JWOD Program at many bases that have supply centers operated by JWOD participating nonprofit agencies. They encourage base personnel at installations that have the JWOD supply centers to purchase supplies from these stores, which are conveniently located right on base! So every time base employees shop at the JWOD operated supply stores they are

¹ *Mathew King, from Noble Red Man: Lakota Wisdomkeeper Mathew King*, compiled and edited by Harvey Arden, Beyond Words Publishing, Inc., Hillsboro, OR, 1994.

doing much more than picking up a case of copier paper, a tape dispenser or postable notes. They are doing the right thing - helping to create and sustain employment for people with disabilities, fulfilling their statutory requirement to buy JWOD products and services and meeting the recycled content requirements of the Executive Order. Now that's teamwork!